

**What on Earth  
Can You Do?**

## HOW TO BE EARTH FRIENDLY

**T**he 35th anniversary of Earthday is April 22 – a good time to commit to adopting new earth-friendly habits. Here are four easy things you can do to cut down on waste:

**If you stop for a latte on the way to work, bring your own reusable mug rather than using a paper cup.**

In King County, we drink more than one million cups of coffee each week, and only one percent of those are sold in durable cups! Use your own cup each day for one year instead of a disposable paper cup and you'll save 32 pounds of wood, 217 gallons of water, and 60 kilowatts of energy.

**If you change your own motor oil, recycle it!**

It takes 42 gallons of crude oil to make two and a half quarts of engine oil. One gallon of used oil can be re-refined to produce two and a half quarts of usable oil. If you live in a single-family home in Redmond, you can recycle your used oil through our curbside collection program. Call Waste Management, Inc. at 1-800-592-9995 for details. (see story on next page)

**Switch to compact fluorescent lighting in your home.**

The bulbs are three to four times more energy efficient than incandescents, and last eight to fifteen times longer. If every American household replaced just one incandescent bulb with a compact fluorescent, we would save the annual energy equivalent of one large power plant and we would throw fewer bulbs in the trash.

**Be good to the environment the next time you are asked “paper or plastic?”** Say, “Neither, thanks, I brought my own!” Switch to durable shopping bags and bring them with you to the store. If you do bring your groceries home in plastic bags, check with the store to see it provides a bin to recycle used bags and bring them back on your next visit. If not, please put plastic bags in the garbage.

If you use plastic shopping bags to store your paper, bottles and cans for recycling, please take items out of the bags before you place them in the recycling bins. Plastic bags become entangled in conveyor belts and jam the recycling sorting and processing equipment. Most grocery stores and some retail stores recycle the plastic bags they give to customers.

### CELEBRATE EARTHDAY!

**April 2, 9 am to 12 pm  
Juel Community Park, NE 116th  
(just off Avondale Road)**

**J**oin the City of Redmond and the nonprofit group Watertenders in celebrating Earthday by planting native trees and shrubs at a restoration site along Bear Creek! This planting event will help create a home for fish and wildlife, clean the air, keep the water in Bear Creek clean, and make a piece of land a bit more beautiful.

We will provide tools, training, gloves, bathrooms, water, light refreshments and lots of gratitude. We work rain or shine, so dress for the weather and dress to get dirty. All participants are required to sign a volunteer agreement before working.

Those under 18 must have the signature of their parent or guardian. Those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, contact Peter Holte at 425-556-2822 or [pholte@redmond.gov](mailto:pholte@redmond.gov).





## Curbside Collection for Used Motor Oil

**A**re you a “do-it-yourselfer” who changes your own motor oil? Did you know that you can recycle used oil at the curb?

Place used oil next to your recycling bins and it will be picked up along with your other recyclables at curbside. This service is currently available only to single-family residences.

### Here's how to do it

Put your used oil in a clean #2 HDPE milk jug or water jug with a screw-on cap. Customers needing empty HDPE jugs for their oil can leave a note on their recycling bins and the recycling truck driver will drop off empty containers. Waste Management will not pick up oil placed in any other type of container. Please write your name and address on the outside of the jug with a water-proof marker. There is a collection limit of two gallons of oil per week per residence. Do not mix used motor oil with brake fluid, transmission fluid, fuel or any other petroleum product. Contaminated oil cannot be recycled and will not be collected.

Never dump used oil down a storm drain or directly on to the ground: it's illegal. Even small amounts of oil

can seriously pollute our soil and surface water, and threaten fish, water birds and plant life.

Questions?  
Call Waste Management, Inc. at 1-800-592-9995.

## Banana Peels = Climate Change?

**W**hen we think of the sources of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change, most of us think of car emissions and coal-fired power plants.

But one significant source of methane gas is the food you throw into your garbage can, which gives off methane gas as it decomposes in landfills. In fact, municipal solid waste landfills are the largest source of human-related methane emissions in the United States, accounting for about 34% of these emissions.

What is the environmentally healthy alternative to landfilling food waste? Recycling it into compost. Redmond is among the first cities in the country to collect food waste from households and restaurants for recycling. The food waste is sent to the Cedar Grove Composting facility in Renton, where it is ground up and mixed with yard waste.

Why doesn't composting food produce methane? Because methane gas is generated when organic material is buried in landfills under anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions. Commercial

composting facilities such as Cedar Grove regularly turn and stir the piles of compost to aerate them, which prevents the creation of methane. The piles are also heated to kill disease pathogens.

The finished compost is then sold to farmers and residential gardeners. By composting food waste, we recycle valuable nutrients back into the soil as a high quality soil amendment.

## Food Recycling Tips

**H**as your household tried the new curbside food waste collection service? Redmond's Recycling program would like to know how well it is working for you. We welcome your comments and questions at [nr@redmond.gov](mailto:nr@redmond.gov) or 425-556-2832.

If you are concerned about odors or insects in your bin while scraps sit there waiting to be collected, here are several ideas that may help:

- If you have smelly items like raw chicken or crab shells, wrap them in a newspaper or a paper bag and place them in your freezer until collection day. Then drop the entire bundle into your cart.
- If you purchase milk or juice in half-gallon paper cartons, use the empty cartons to collect food



## Two types of pollution

There are two types of pollution that decrease the water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams. "Point source" pollution comes from one definite place that produces a large amount of pollutants, such as a leaking industrial storage tank or a sewage line.

The second type of pollution is called "non-point source" pollution. This pollution does not stem from one definite place, but rather from many, many small sources, such as one drip of oil from one car repeated by thousands of cars on the road, a pet owner who does not pick up after his or her pet, or an extra quarter cup of fertilizer that is not absorbed by the lawn.

When rain falls, the stormwater running off pavement, streets and lawns brings all these various small bits of non-point pollution together, taking it through the storm drain and into our local waterways. Non-point source pollution is by far the greatest threat to water quality in our lakes, river, ponds, and streams.

scraps and then place the entire carton into your yard waste cart. The carton can also be composted.

- If you have problems with fruit flies or maggots in your kitchen container, just pop the container

in your microwave oven for five or ten seconds and the heat will kill any pests and their eggs.

- If you do not have any yard waste, place your food scraps into a brown paper grocery bag and place the entire bag into the cart for collection. The bag will help to keep your cart clean and the paper will compost along with the food.
- You may have to hose out the cart periodically to remove residues, but we hope this will be only a minor inconvenience offset by the many benefits of diverting more materials from our waste stream.

## Finding homes for items that are "too good to toss"

Ever wondered what construction companies do with surplus supplies or what demolition contractors do with useful items in buildings scheduled to be torn down? What about the sofa or leftover decking cluttering up your garage? The state Department of Ecology and its participating city and county partners have a solution and it's as easy as surfing the Web.

The [www.2good2toss.com](http://www.2good2toss.com) web site is the place to go to find new and re-usable construction materials and large household items.

Find a home for that serviceable sofa and save it from the landfill. Locate the wallboard you need to finish your basement. And do it for free!

"Think of it as an online garage sale, where the valuable items are free or low cost," says Shelly McClure, who coordinates the online-exchange project for Ecology. "The site is a way to extend the useful life of items and throw less away."

## Become a Natural Yard Care Neighbor

Natural yard care improves the health of our environment and protects our children and pets from unnecessary chemicals by helping homeowners learn how to care for their yards naturally.

Start with these five easy steps:

- Water deeply but infrequently, no more than 1 inch per week.
- Use organic or slow-release fertilizers.
- Avoid chemical pesticides.
- Grasscycle: leave clippings on the lawn.
- Use a layer of organic mulch around plants to hold in moisture.

Send for these free booklets by sending your name and address to [nr@redmond.gov](mailto:nr@redmond.gov):

*Natural Yard Care*  
*Natural Pest Weed and Disease Control*  
*Growing Healthy Soil*  
*Smart Watering*  
*Composting at Home*  
*Choosing the Right Plants for a Beautiful, Trouble-Free Garden*

Garden-savvy staff at the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline – 206-633-0224 – are also available to assist you to garden in an environmentally friendly way. Call them for help with natural pest control, composting,





water-efficient gardening, creating healthy soil and more.

The Natural Yard Care Neighborhood program is co-sponsored by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the City of Redmond, and local water utilities and purveyors.

### Get a Great Deal on Yard Care Products!

**T**he King County Northwest Natural Yard Days program lasts from April 15 to May 15.

During the promotion, natural yard care products will be discounted at 25% or more at participating retailers. Featured products include electric mulching mowers, push reel mowers, weed pullers, compost, organic fertilizer, soaker hoses, water timers, slug and snail bait, moss control, and insecticidal soap. For more information about Northwest Natural Yard Days call the Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline at 206-633-0224 or visit King County's website at [www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/naturallyardcare/yard-days.asp](http://www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/naturallyardcare/yard-days.asp).

## HOW TO BE WATER FRIENDLY

### Redmond Takes Lead in Keeping Water Clean

**C**lean water is vital to all living things and a valuable community resource.

The importance of clean water is nationally recognized and regulated through the Federal Clean Water Act, which requires that water in lakes, rivers and streams is clean enough to meet the needs of fish and wildlife and safe for human contact. Federal, state and regional/

### Reduce Junk Mail!

If you're like most people, you receive a pile of unwanted, unsolicited mail each day. There are several simple ways you can reduce junk mail:

- The Center for a New American Dream's "Declare Your Independence from Junk Mail" campaign at [www.newdream.org/junkmail](http://www.newdream.org/junkmail) is full of useful waste prevention information. Use the website resources to encourage Congress to create a "Do Not Mail Registry," and demand that major direct mail companies to take you off their lists and reform their marketing strategies.
- King County has a "Stop Junk Mail Kit" available on its website, where you can ask to be taken off the mailing lists of several top marketing agencies. Check it out at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/ResRecy/wasteprevention/junkmail.asp>.

Information provided by Seattle Public Utilities



use to better focus our programs and make our projects even more effective. We have also taken the lead in sharing this information with the State Department of Ecology.

"We are pleased to see Redmond's initiative in promoting and protecting clean water," says Anne Dettelbach, a Water Quality Coordinator for the State Department of Ecology. "We look forward to working with the City and the citizens of Redmond to address water quality concerns."

Analysis of the monitoring data found that water at 47 sampling sites along the lake and near our streams did not meet state standards. The most common problems are that the water is too warm, has too little dissolved oxygen, and has high bacteria counts. According to Dettelbach, these problems are not that uncommon, "Redmond's surface water quality issues are classic issues that urban areas face."

Along with continued water quality monitoring, Redmond's Natural Resources Division has improved

local governments all share the responsibility for protecting water quality.

The City of Redmond has long recognized the importance of clean water to the environment and the community. Rather than waiting for state and federal mandates to drive our water quality protection efforts, our Natural Resources Division has established programs and constructed projects to protect and enhance water quality. Additionally, for the last eight years we have collected water quality data that we

its understanding of Redmond's drain system and watershed flow patterns to better isolate what may be causing water quality issues. This information will also support the sighting of structural projects and direct management actions for protecting water quality, and will strengthen our efforts to find and eliminate sources of contamination.

## Keep Our Water Clean?

**K**eeping water in our lakes, rivers and streams clean is important in Redmond, and not just because federal requires it. It is important because about 40% of the water we drink comes from well water, and when surface water soaks into the ground it becomes our drinking water. It is important because we live here. It is important because we share this place with other living creatures.

Here are some easy things residents can do to protect water quality in our waterways and in our drinking water wells:

- Never pour anything but clean rainwater into our storm drains. Storm drains connect directly to local waterways. The water receives little if any treatment before it reaches our lakes, rivers, or streams.
- Clean up after your pet! Pet waste can raise bacteria counts in our waterways.
- Garden naturally and reduce your use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Wash your car at a carwash or on your lawn so that the

grass and soil soak up the waste water.

- Dispose of paints and other harmful materials at a designated hazardous waste collection site. Anti-freeze and oil can be recycled!
- Volunteer to plant trees at a restoration site.

## Summer Drought?

**W**e saw heavy rains in January, with lowland flooding outside the City and frequent closings of mountain passes due to standing water. The rains were great news for Redmond's five drinking water wells, because they recharge the wells and the areas around them.

Unfortunately, the lack of snow isn't good news for our surface water supply from the Tolt River Watershed. That's where we get about 60% of our water, purchased through the Cascade Water Alliance. The snow pack at Tolt River Watershed is at about 25% of normal as we head into the spring growing season.

From May and until the first fall rains, we always rely on our wells and withdrawals from our winter snow pack to cover our spring and summer watering needs.

This year, we are starting with much less snow pack than usual. Check out the regional surface water supply at [www.seattle.gov/util/About\\_SPU/W004041.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/W004041.asp) to see the supply change with the weather.

Getting through a low water supply year takes some planning now – before it's hot and dry. To protect our vital drinking water supplies during the summer drought, take these simple steps:

For homeowners, start indoors:

- Take an inventory of water appliances and faucets and fix leaks.
- Take shorter showers.
- Shut water off while brushing teeth.
- Run only full loads of dishes and laundry.

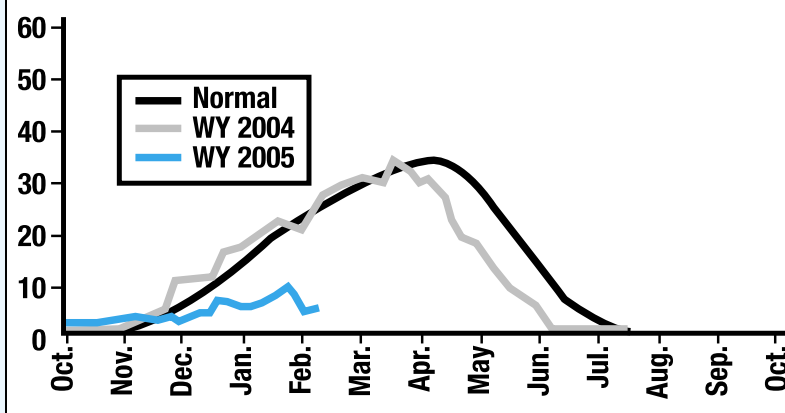




- Check for and fix leaky faucets, toilets and showers.
- If it is time for a new clothes washer, buy one that is water efficient and will provide you with a rebate. Qualifying models and rebate applications are at [www.cascadewater.org](http://www.cascadewater.org). Rebates are also available for water efficient dishwashers through Puget Sound Energy at [www.pse.com](http://www.pse.com).

And outdoors:

- Check for and fix leaks in irrigation systems, hoses and faucets.
- Set your controllers, sprinklers and hose-timers so that they are not used in the wind and rain.
- Group plants with similar water and growing needs together.
- Amend your existing soils with compost and mulch.
- Use alternatives to chemical



**As of February 14th, snow accumulations are well below normal for this time of the year and are estimated at about 10 percent of normal. Most of the earlier season accumulated snowpack melted during the warm, heavy rains in January.**

products or the least toxic option whenever possible.

- Consider alternatives to thirsty lawns on steep slopes and shady areas of near streams and lakes.

Need more information? Email the Natural Lawn and Garden Program at [lawn&gardenhotline@seattletilth.org](mailto:lawn&gardenhotline@seattletilth.org) or call 206-633-0224.

## Keeping Tabs on Hazardous Materials

Thanks to the 2,000 Redmond businesses that helped protect our groundwater supply by filling out a Hazardous Materials Questionnaire during their business license renewal process.

Businesses in the City's Wellhead Protection Area were inventoried to identify known and suspected hazardous products and chemicals used in and around their businesses. They were also asked to make plans for reducing the amounts stored and properly disposing their products.

This was the first year for the hazardous materials inventory process. Thanks to the efforts of our business community, all questionnaires were returned within six months.

Knowing what hazardous materials are used by Redmond businesses is important because more than 35% of our water supply is right beneath our feet. This aquifer runs under all types of development, and in some places it is less than 15 feet below ground. That means that any chemicals that come in contact with the surface of the ground can easily and quickly move into our drinking water supply.

Businesses can check for information about hazardous waste handling through the King County Business Waste Line at 206-296-3976, or contact Redmond's Wellhead Protection staff at 425-556-2868. To report hazardous materials spills, call 425-556-2200.

